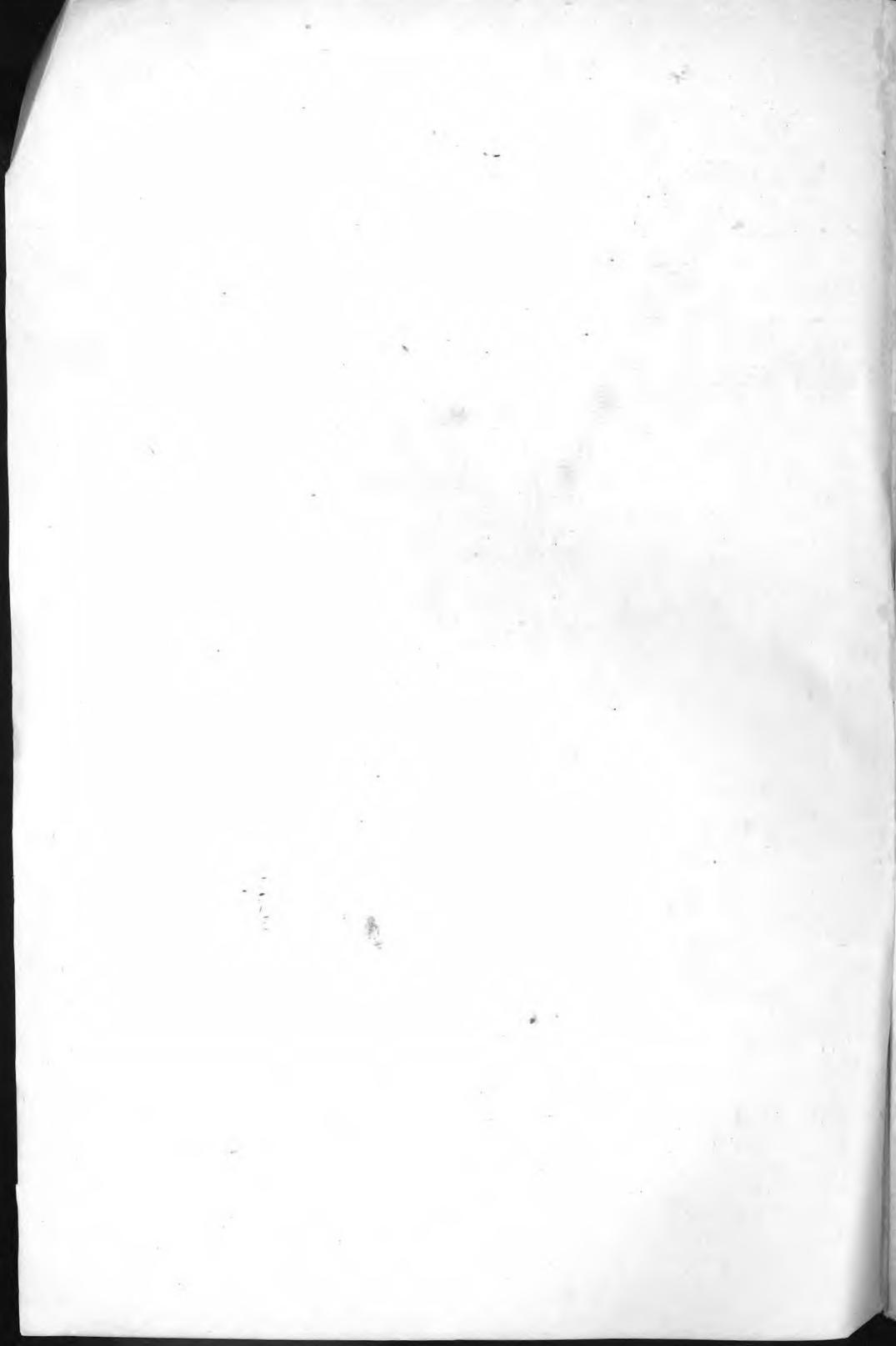


Evils of Unrestricted Immigration

A speech
of
William A. Stone of Pa.
In the
House of Representatives,
Jan. 27, 1897.



Speed

EVILS OF UNRESTRICTED IMMIGRATION.

SPEECH

OF

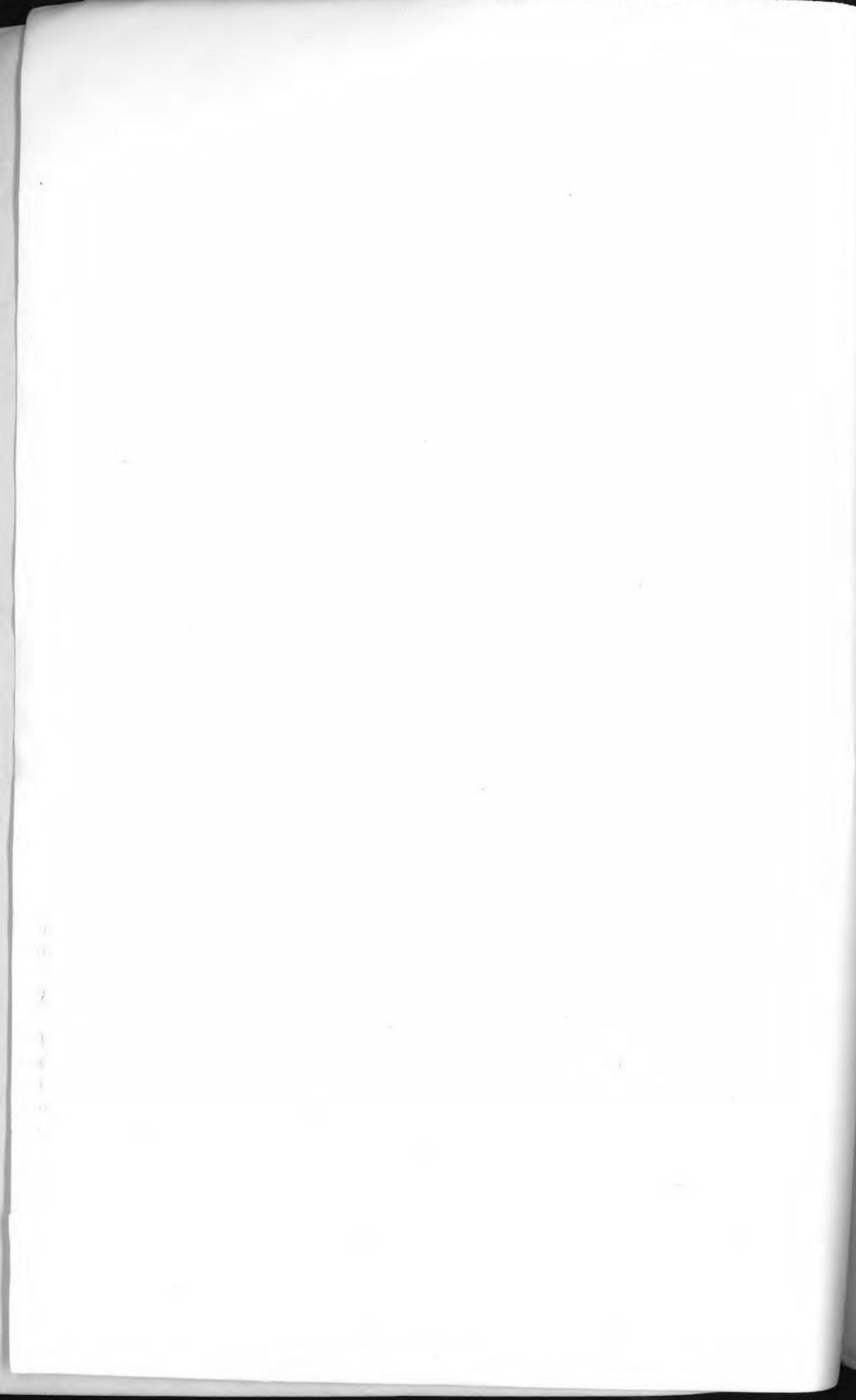
HON. WM. A. STONE,
OF PENNSYLVANIA,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1897.

WASHINGTON.
1897.



S P E E C H
O F
HON. WILLIAM A. STONE.

The House having under consideration the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments to the bill (H. R. 7861) to amend the immigration laws of the United States—

Mr. WILLIAM A. STONE said:

Mr. SPEAKER: At this late day in the session, and with our experience in the difficulty of passing immigration bills, we can not stop to have every bill trimmed to our taste.

This bill comes before the House on the report of the committee of conference. It does not suit me in all its particulars. I would prefer a more drastic bill. But it is an improvement on our present legislation.

I believe the principal opposition to this bill comes from the steamship companies. They are writing to their friends to telegraph their members of Congress to oppose the bill. In this connection I send to the Clerk's desk and ask to have read the following telegram.

The Clerk read as follows:

To F. W. A. POPPIE, *Millbank, S. Dak.*:

Immigration bill comes up in House Wednesday. Wire your Congressman our expense protesting against proposed exclusion and requesting bill be defeated, informing him that vote in favor means defeat next election.

(Signed) CLAUSSENUS & CO.,
North German Lloyd.

Mr. WILLIAM A. STONE. This telegram was forwarded to Senator LODGE by Mr. Poppie, and was published in this morning's Post.

This is not a political controversy. The last national Republican convention and also the last national Democratic convention declared in favor of restricting immigration. I desire to send to the Clerk's desk and ask to have read the platforms of these two conventions on this subject.

The Clerk read as follows:

FOREIGN IMMIGRATION.

For the protection of the quality of our American citizenship and our American workingmen against the fatal competition of low-priced labor, we

demand that the immigration laws be thoroughly enforced and so extended as to exclude from immigration to the United States those who can neither read nor write.

Mr. WILLIAM A. STONE. That is the provision adopted by the Republican national convention. Now I ask the Clerk to read the one adopted by the national Democratic convention.

The Clerk read as follows:

KEEP OUT PAUPER LABOR.

We hold that the most efficient way of protecting American labor is to prevent the importation of foreign pauper labor to compete with it in the home market.

Mr. WILLIAM A. STONE. Mr. Speaker, it is simply a question of political economy, and not in any sense partisan.

I have been curious to learn just how this educational test would affect the immigration to this country. The total number of immigrants coming here, as shown by the report of the Commissioner of Immigration for the last fiscal year, was 343,269. This is an increase of 84,731 over the number coming during the previous year, or an increase of 32.77 per cent. As times improve, immigration will largely increase; and unless we pass some measure restricting immigration, the number coming into this country during the next fiscal year will exceed a half million.

The conference report practically excludes only those who can neither read nor write. Taking the status of those who came into this country during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1896, we find that 65,103 came from Austria-Hungary, 68,060 from Italy, and 45,137 from Russia proper, making a total of 178,291, or 51.93 per cent.

Of the 65,103 who came from Austria-Hungary, 23,973 could neither read nor write; of the 68,060 coming from Italy, 31,374 could neither read nor write; of the 45,137 coming from Russia proper, 12,816 could neither read nor write. Out of 178,291 coming from these three countries, a total of 68,163 could neither read nor write.

Now, there came from Germany during this same period, 31,885; from Norway, 8,855; from Sweden, 21,177; from England, 19,492; from Ireland, 40,262; a total of 121,671, or 35.44 per cent from these five countries.

Now, of the 31,885 who came from Germany, all but 713 could read and write. Of the 8,855 who came from Norway, all but 57 could read and write. Of the 21,177 who came from Sweden, all but 146 could read and write. Of the 19,492 who came from England, they could all read and write but 757. And of the 40,262 who came from Ireland, all but 2,473 could read and write. So that if this conference report had been the law during the last

fiscal year, out of a total of 121,671 immigrants who came from Germany, Norway, Sweden, England, and Ireland, only 4,146 would have been debarred, while out of the 178,291 who came from Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia proper, 68,163 would have been debarred. So do you not see that all this talk about the Germans being affected by the passage of this law is ridiculous? It would not affect the Germans; it would not affect the Swedes; it would not affect the Norwegians; it would not affect the Englishmen, nor the Irishmen. But it would very seriously affect and restrict the immigration from countries from which undesirable immigration comes, and in that respect this conference report is satisfactory.

The Commissioner of Immigration has also made a report of the amount of money brought into this country by immigrants. It is curious to note that the large majority of immigrants coming from Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia proper bring less than \$30 per head with them, while the great majority of immigrants from Germany, Norway, Sweden, England, and Ireland average more than \$30 per head; and although fewer numbers come from these countries, they bring almost twice as much money with them.

Mr. BARTHOLDT. Will the gentleman permit me to interrupt him?

Mr. WILLIAM A. STONE. Yes.

Mr. BARTHOLDT. The report of the Commissioner of Immigration shows that during last year between \$4,500,000 and \$5,000,000 were brought in by the immigrants, and he admits that that represents about one-third of what they really brought in, because before they leave their homes they are told not to tell how much money they have.

Mr. KIEFER. If the gentleman will allow me, I will give the exact amount.

Mr. WILLIAM A. STONE. I can not yield, because I have only twenty minutes.

It is also important for us to consider where these immigrants go when they reach this country.

I find upon examination of the Commissioner's report that of the 343,269 immigrants who came into this country during the last fiscal year, 127,082 stopped in the State of New York; 61,007 of them stopped in Pennsylvania; 36,561 stopped in Massachusetts. A total of 224,650, or almost two-thirds of the whole number who came into this country, remained in the three States of New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Why, the gentleman from Missouri who opposes this report [Mr. BARTHOLDT] knows nothing of the evils of unrestricted immigration. Only 2,485 went to Missouri. The gentleman from Louisiana, a member of the

committee who opposes this report, only had 1,516 in his State. Wisconsin had 4,572; Nebraska, 1,043; Minnesota, 5,979. No wonder gentlemen do not seriously regard it essential to restrict immigration when they are not bothered by it.

It is the great States of New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts that suffer. The theory that these immigrants settle down on our Western prairies and become tillers of the soil is ridiculous. They do not settle on our Western prairies. They settle in the great cities of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Pittsburg, and among the mines, the mills, the factories, and the coke ovens in these three States; and, in the name of my State, I demand that legislation be enacted that will relieve us from this imposition.

This bill will restrict immigration, not wholly, nor even sufficiently, but it will restrict it to some extent. Properly enforced, properly construed, it will keep out of Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts about 1 in 4 who now come in.

If these immigrants entered into the professions and among the ranks of skilled labor, it would not fall with such a heavy hand upon that class of people who are known as common laborers. Let us look at the report and see what occupations were followed by those who came last year. Of the 343,269 who came, 50 of them were lawyers, 147 were clergymen, 19 were editors, 143 of them were physicians. They have not increased competition among the clergymen, the editors, the doctors, or the lawyers.

No very considerable number of them were skilled workmen. There were only 534 machinists, only 126 jewelers, only 10 dress-makers, only 3,676 carpenters, only 589 gardeners, only 106 plasterers, only 117 plumbers. But there were 123,028 who had no occupation, 91,262 laborers, 38,926 servants, making a total of 253,216 common laborers who entered into direct competition with our poorer people. Of the 343,269, all but 90,051 entered into direct competition with the laboring men and women of this country, who receive the poorest wages, and whose lot is the hardest. Two-thirds of this great army—or nearly two-thirds, considerably over 200,000—settled in the States of New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, and entered into competition with our own people for their daily bread.

This country to-day is suffering from a surplus of common labor. There is work enough for all the men, women, and children who belong here, but there is not work enough for the laboring men and women of the world.

We put a tariff on a machine to keep it out of this country and give to the producer the home market. That tariff operates and is intended to operate to increase the wages of the men and women

in this country. That very increase of wages is an inducement to the laboring men and women of other countries to come here and compete with our own people for these increased wages. Our laboring people would be better off—much better off—if you could give them the exclusive labor market of the country, and not force them into competition with the cheap pauper labor of other countries. We have been legislating for the producer, and properly so. It is high time that we begin to legislate for the man and the woman whose only capital is the ability to do a day's work. We protect our coal, our iron, our steel, our cotton, and I hope soon our wool.

Why? That the American producer may have the benefit of the home market. Now, if that is good policy, if that is good political philosophy, if that is good political economy, let us protect the brawn and the hand that produce the coal, the iron, and the steel. [Applause.]

I would like to see all the laboring men and laboring women of Europe have employment, but I would not like to see them employed by the turning out of our own working people. I have no unkind feelings toward foreigners, but I believe it to be my duty, so far as in my power lies, to protect the laboring men and the laboring women of this country before extending protection elsewhere. Let us begin it here. This country is rich enough and great enough to support our own laboring people. Wages will regulate themselves and keep pace in price with other things, but under this competition with the cheap pauper labor of Europe our laboring men and women are unable to obtain sufficient work and sufficient wages to secure the necessities of life.

Thousands of foreigners come here every year, save their wages, and send them to their relatives and friends in their own country.

It is estimated on good authority that during each year from twenty-five to thirty millions of dollars are sent by Italians in this country to Italy. They do not become citizens of this country; they come here to earn money to send home, and when they have earned a sufficient quantity, they go back and spend it there. Large amounts are sent to other countries also. Taking this into consideration, with the large amounts that are spent each year by visitors and tourists from this country in Europe, it may be said with some show of truth that the United States is practically supporting Europe to-day.

If we could only have our people spend their money at home, and keep the money earned here at home, there would be better times and less distress in this country. We can not stop people from visiting Europe. We can not stop a few of our silly women from marrying men with titles and bestowing upon them their for-

tunes. Fortunately, however, Europeans with titles do not marry our poor girls, our sensible girls, but only the rich, frivolous kind, whom we can well spare. But we can stop the people from other countries from coming here and filching the bread from the mouths of our people by such restrictive measures that will prevent their coming and give to the laboring men and women of this country the labor of the country until such time as there is greater demand for labor than they can supply.

Let us, therefore, adopt this conference report as the most likely measure we can get enacted into law at this session, and adjourn, having passed an immigration bill and kept our promises to the country. [Applause.]

